

SCIENTIFIC AND STATISTICAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE REPORT

National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Cost/Earning Survey

Dr. Carl Lian (NMFS Northwest Fisheries Science Center [NWFSC]) gave an oral report to the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) on a planned survey of 2003 cost and earnings by the limited entry trawl fleet. The survey, which will be administered during the first quarter of 2005, will provide a snapshot of annual cost and earnings by the limited-entry trawl fleet prior to the trawl buyback program. Previous attempts to collect cost information have not been very successful. To improve the response rate compared to the most recent previous survey, conducted in 1999, the new survey will have a simpler questionnaire and will be administered by means of a personal interview. It is anticipated that the survey will be repeated at three-year intervals. SSC members noted that the simplified questionnaire would not allow the survey to distinguish West Coast fishing activities from those conducted elsewhere and would not measure such costs as debt-financing or other measures of vessel value.

Off-Year Science Activities:

Recreational Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE) Workshop Report

The SSC received a written report and an oral summary by Dr. Steve Ralston on the Recreational CPUE Statistics Workshop that was held in Santa Cruz, California during June 2004. The report makes suggestions that are relevant for several of the assessments that will be developed during 2005 for several West Coast groundfish stocks, including approaches for CPUE data analyses and bag-limit adjustments. The SSC endorses the report and its recommendations, particularly the recommendation that the Recreational Fishery Information Network (RecFIN) develop a vessel-level database to facilitate recovering CPUE data by trip. The SSC Groundfish Subcommittee chair will work with the RecFIN Technical Committee to facilitate producing the new database.

Stock Assessment Data Workshop Report

Ms. Stacey Miller (NWFSC) distributed a written report on the Stock Assessment Data Workshop that was held in Seattle, Washington during July 2004. The draft report will be circulated to all participants of the workshop and finalized soon. The SSC will review the written report of the workshop at the March 2005 Council meeting.

Stock Assessment Modeling Workshop

Ms. Stacey Miller (NWFSC) gave an oral report to the SSC on the Stock Assessment Modeling Workshop that was held in Seattle, Washington during the last week of October 2004. A written report on the workshop will be included in the Briefing Book for the March 2005 Council meeting. The SSC suggests that the summary recommendations from the workshop should be

circulated soon to all workshop participants and the teams that will develop the 2005 stock assessments.

Reviewers from the Center for Independent Experts (CIE) attended both the Recreational CPUE Statistics Workshop and the Stock Assessment Modeling Workshop. The SSC again requests that the reports from the CIE reviewers be included in the public record of the workshops, as has been done with CIE review reports elsewhere in the country.

The SSC commends staff at the NWFSC for organizing and facilitating the suite of successful stock assessment workshops that occurred during 2004. At some future meeting the Council and its advisory committees may wish to formally review the off-year science activities and provide guidance concerning the process for planning such activities for 2006.

Vermillion Rockfish Stock Assessment in 2005

Dr. Alec MacCall presented a brief summary of the data currently available for conducting a stock assessment of vermillion rockfish. Patterns evident in the available size-composition data suggest that any stock assessment model consistent with these data would require considerable complexity or would be based on tenuous assumptions. The SSC concurs with Dr. MacCall's opinion that considerable resources would be required to explore additional data sources and to carry out the analysis, but the likelihood is small that an assessment suitable for management advice would result. The SSC recommends that Dr. MacCall compile the available information, including the southern California commercial passenger fishing vessel observer data and the California set gillnet logbook data, and develop an informational report for review during 2005 by a Stock Assessment Review Panel and inclusion in the 2005 Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation document. The SSC anticipates that an assessment for vermillion rockfish may be developed during the 2007 stock assessment cycle.

PFMC
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